

6 Sept.

In response to repeated phone calls, had half-hour conversation with D. He said he had sent report on our informal conversation of 23 Aug to K and, somewhat to his surprise, had received message from to be transmitted to me. (D read this slowly and urged me to take notes).

1. K would undertake nothing on international scene that would embarrass USG prior to elections, provided ~~xxxx~~ US behaved likewise.

2. K would not come to UN for opening; if he came, it would be after elections. He did not desire to interfere with internal politics.

((under 1; this specifically applied to Berlin.))

I replied that ~~ix~~ SU actions in Cuba had already caused Admin great trouble; in view of recent events, K assurance was both hollow and tardy. D demurred that he had tried to reach me with message a week ago. ((i.e., prior to discovery of SAMs, Pres. statement of Sept 4; was this hint that SU would not announce SAMs if US did not--encouragement to Pres to refrain from announcing? Or was D approach motivated by, or ~~xxxx~~ made even more urgent by, Pres statement of Sept 4?)) ((Meanwhile, SU was protesting U-2 strongly; was this a hint that U-2s should be stopped: a) incident would cause "trouble," would be due to US action, would release K from bargain; b) presence of SAMs made incident possible; c) there was nothing more for U-2s to find; d) if ~~xxx~~ there were anything more there to find, K wouldn't announce it or use it politically prior to election; e) therefore, just as well not to find it prior to election (assuming Pres would not want to act strongly, or have matter public, prior to election); f) by not calling public attention to U-2s--despite hints in Pres statement of ~~xxxx~~ Sept 4 Sept--K would not make it difficult to suspend flights temporarily.)) ((Did D know of missiles? U-2? Seems simply messenger here--and he did not bring up Cuba)) I pointed out ~~xxxx~~ extreme sensitivity to this particular issue ((i.e., more than Berlin) by Congress and public. Pres had understood that K did not wish to give aid to political opponents of Admin ((Aug 23 talk?)). Therefore he took these recent events as a deliberate and personal affront. ((Compare to Ike on Suez.))

I also described his indignation at the nasty tone of the Izvestia comment on the U-2 note, which he had taken pains to make moderate in tone. D said he was not familiar with this comment, that there had been no official reply yet, that you knew how newspapers were.

D said he would report attitudes on Cuba carefully. He repeated several times that nothing new was going on in Cuba, that events there had been proceeding gradually and quietly for some time, that arms there were purely for defensive purposes. I cited Pres distinction between offensive and defensive weapons, and he said weapons were defensive. He made no comment, confirming or otherwise, on my mention of Soviet ~~xxxxxx~~ technicians, electronic gear or missile preparations ((Sou. read this as meaning strategic missiles; I take it as SAMs)).

((Same day, Sept 6, D described weapons as defensive to Stev))

((Guess: K message, parts 1 and 2, meant: I won't cause political trouble for you, by revealing anything embarrassing, if you don't. He couldn't mean: I won't do anything secretly--i.e., without immediate political consequences for you: since, as S points out, he had already done so, as Pres had revealed

After phoning me for several days, had a half-hour interview with Dob. He said after our informal conversation of Aug. 23 he had informed the Premier, who had immediately asked him (somewhat to Dob's surprise, I gather) to pass on the following message, on which he urged me to take notes).

memory

Sept 6: Dobrynin-Sorenson

The Soviet Government will take no action prior to the November elections to complicate the international situation or to raise the level of tension between our governments. We undertake not to do this so long as no action on the other side changes the situation.

2. The Premier definitely will not come to the UN for the opening of the General Assembly. If he should decide to come at all, it would not be till late November (after the elections). He does not want to interfere in your internal affairs.

This includes Berlin and the German question.

I appreciated this message, but must report the President's feeling that recent actions by the Soviets had already done a great deal to complicate the situation. Congress and the public were much more sensitive to Cuba. In view of ~~their~~ Soviet actions there, this assurance seemed both hollow and tardy. (At this point Dob. interjected that he had tried to reach me with this message a week ago, before the Cuban issue heated up). The President had understood that the Premier did not desire to furnish weapons to our political opponents--therefore he takes the Soviet actions in Cuba as something of a deliberate and personal affront. The President was also very irritated by the Tass comment on our U-2 note, which he had taken pains to make moderate, temperate, and conciliatory (?). Dob claimed not to have seen the Tass comment, but you know how newspapers are, it was necessary to wait for the official comment.

He said he appreciated my comments on Cuba and would pass them on immediately. However, the arms being sent there were purely for defensive purposes. What the Soviet Union was doing there was nothing radical or new; the process at issue had been going on gradually and quietly for some time. To my mention of electronic equipment, technicians and missiles ((SAMS?)) he made no comment.

McG-Dob, June 14

(end): The Amb expressed his admiration for the political leadership of the Pres, and asked me who I thought would win the Congressional elections in November. I told him that this was a question he should put to others, and we parted as cheerfully as we began.

((subject of elections, so far as record shows, always brought up by Russians))

14

Aug. 22, Schlesinger, Dob

1. The Amb's chief interest was evidently in American domestic politics. He asked me a number of questions about the prospects of the autumn elections, the strength of conservatism in the Congress, the power of the John Birch Society, etc. In answer I tried to remind him of the ebb and flow of American politics. ...

Oct 10, Thompson-Dob

T. asked when K was likely to come. Dob said this had not yet been decided in Moscow. When I said the rumors seem to indicate the latter part of November, he added "or early December."

Dob then asked for my personal opinion as to the wisdom of such a visit at this time. ... I went on to say that frequent contacts between the President and Mr K would be helpful as I was convinced that many misunderstandings existed and that at least some of these could be cleared up through closer contact. On the other hand, I said he must be aware of the feeling aroused in this country by developments in Cuba, which did not provide a very good background against which to discuss other questions. I also said I could not observe, in the exchanges which we had had so far, much hope for a successful settlement of the Berlin question.

D. indicated he agreed with this view and said that such a meeting was bound to generate hopes which might result in disappointment. He also mentioned the imminence of American elections.

I pointed out that Sec. Rusk ~~xxx~~ had told Mr. Gromyko that our elections need play no role in negotiations about Berlin, but said that the Republican Party apparently intended to exploit the Cuban issue in the coming campaign, which might further arouse ~~xx~~ public sentiment. Mr. D said purely from the point of view of elections, he assumed that next Fall would be the ideal time for a meeting, but then went on to indicate his own view that early December of this year might be an appropriate time. My impression is that he will recommend against any visit at this time but that if K insists on coming, it should be some time in early December.

Sept. 11 INR memo to Sec on Tass statement

Sov warning to US and promises of support for Cuba came two weeks after Pres publicly announced that the US had no intention of invading Cuba ((see statement to Gromyko, Oct 18)) and one week after he stressed the US view that Soviet weapons being sent to Cuba are defensive in character. Thus Moscow seems to be using its long-standing device of offering to fight when it has been given assurances that it will not have to. ((not quite!)) K's promise of support for Communist China last June after the Pres and the US Amb in Warsaw had reassured Peiping ~~xxxx~~ and the world at large of US intentions ~~xx~~ are illustrative in this respect.

The warnings and the insistence on the USSR's "right" to protect Cuba are in part offset by Moscow's apparent readiness to wait out the US elections in November before insisting on further negotiations in Germany. Action on a peace treaty, though not necessarily in Berlin itself, is thus postponed again ~~xx~~ until additional negotiations have taken place. This would seem to push the next potential deadline, if any, for a peace treaty into 1963. It may also prove ~~xx~~ to be significant that the statement includes no threat of a separate peace treaty with East Germany should negotiations fail.

Significance of the November date:

The decision to relax pressure ~~xx~~ for a Berlin "settlement" until the November elections supplements a growing list of recent references to November in Soviet/GDR planning on Berlin. (There were, however, intelligence reports as early as April indicating that the Soviets estimated President Kennedy would be unable to negotiate seriously on Berlin until the 1962 congressional elections were out of the way.) There have been several reports--including the most recent GDR defector comments--that operational plans for the Sov and GDR armed forces in Germany, plans seemingly geared to a Berlin move, are scheduled for completion in November. Amb Dobbs' comments to Amb Stevenson that K would not appear at the UN "before mid-November"--if he came--would also seem to fit into this pattern.

Although the specific thrust of Soviet intentions still remain unclear, it would seem that some new Soviet initiative on Berlin is to come in November or thereabouts, possibly involving an effort to secure a summit meeting between K and Pres.

The ~~xxxx~~ Sov statement is Moscow's first overt move to establish a direct link between the Berlin and Cuban crises.

...statement suggests that Moscow is aware that a drastic heightening of tension simultaneously in Berlin and Cuba may lead to US reactions (especially in the atmosphere of an election campaign) whose consequences might be difficult to control.... Moreover, Moscow may want to leave the inference that US acquiescence in the close Soviet-Cuban relationship... might elicit Soviet restraint in Berlin.

((If you don't provoke Cuban crisis before elections, we won't ~~xxx~~ push Berlin till then--you will have quiet time.))

Oct 6, 1962: Sov mission, NY. Rusk, Stev, Davis, Hillenbrand,
; Gromyko, Semenov

Sec pointed out that we were prepared to sit down and analyze all questions, both central and peripheral, at any time, so as to see where the points of agreement or disagreement lay. As far as U.S. elections were concerned, the Sec pointed out that our government was in business and there was no need to wait. By direction of the President, the Secretary of State was to stay out of the elections and there was no point in having a crisis by appointment in November. We were prepared to analyze the situation at any time with Mr. Gromyko or through whatever other channel might be profitable.

...Mr. G then recalled the Secretary's remark that there was no need to wait for the November elections and said that he would take note of that statement. While he did not believe that the situation in this respect was as simple as that, he did understand what the Secretary had in mind. On the part of the SU there had never been any lack of readiness to exchange views on the questions the two sides were facing, if the situation really warranted such an exchange.

Oct. 10: Dobrynin-Thompson lunch, 1 pm, Sov Emb.

Oct. 13, Doo.--Stev

Oct 13, Bowles - Dob

(first time they had talked; Bowles leaving for Africa)
(Dob had asked for lunch a week earlier)

Almost immediately Dob brought up the question of Cuba and expressed worry and surprise at the intensity of US public reaction.

In response to his question as to why we attached such importance to a relatively small island, I outlined the history of US-Cuba relations and drew a parallel to the situation in 1898, the presence of Spanish misrule, and the ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ US public agitation that abetted the outbreak of war.

When he protested that the Soviet presence in Cuba was no greater provocation than the US presence in Turkey, I pointed out that the present Administration had inherited a status quo that had grown up since the war. In some areas the advantage in this status quo had been with us, in others with Moscow; in still others it was a stand-off.

Our presence in Greece and Turkey, for instance, represented our reaction to Stalin's military and political pressures against these two countries following the war. It had become part of a status quo which in all its complexity could safely be changed only by negotiation with reciprocal benefits to each side.

...However, in Cuba the USSR had unilaterally altered this status quo by introducing a wholly new element. Our reaction, in these circumstances, should have been foreseeable.

Moreover, many US students of Sov affairs were soberly convinced that the SU had made this move deliberately to provoke a US military response against Cuba on the theory that this would divert our energies from Berlin, and elsewhere, and enable Sov spokesmen to charge us with aggression in the US. ((who?))

If this kind of thinking had in fact played a part in the Sov analysis, it was extremely dangerous. If we did move into Cuba in response to some overt act or offensive build-up by the SU, a global chain of events might be set in motion which could have catastrophic consequences.

For instance, the Sovs might then be tempted to take what they would term "counter-action" in Berlin and perhaps Turkey; and the US, by that time in an extremely tense mood, would react with vigor.

The SU, in turn, would feel pressed by the Chinese and other extremists to counter our moves, and we would be on our way together down the long slippery slide.

(discussed the Guns of August) I asked D if he had read The Guns of August. He said, "only a three-page summary." I urged him to read at least the first few chapters in which he would see a pattern of politico-military action and counter-action that could be repeated in the next six months.

In July 1914, men of intelligence in Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France and England, all quite conscious of the forces which were feeding the approaching holocaust, found themselves enmeshed in internal pressures, commitments and precedents which left them powerless to avoid the inevitable. It would be the greatest folly in history if we were to repeat this insane process in the nuclear age.

2. Dob: Bowles

Dob asked me what, in the circumstances, I thought could be done in regard to Cuba. Stressing that I was speaking solely as an individual, I suggested three moves that the SU could sponsor to ease the situation.

1. Dob should remind his Government of Pres Kennedy's sharp distinction between defensive and offensive weapons in his recent statement. I was particularly concerned on this point because current reports indicated that Sov shipments were in fact beginning to include weapons which had a clearly offensive capacity.

If this continued, it could produce--with the help of some incident perpetrated perhaps by individuals striving to provoke another "Remember the Maine" incident--the very conflict which the Administration is anxious to avoid. Pres Kennedy had committed himself to act under certain specific circumstances. This was a clear commitment, and the SU should not take it lightly.

2. From many reports, Castro now had ample defensive arms with which to protect himself from casual landings. The SU should tell him that under present circumstances no more arms will be shipped. The SU should then ask Castro himself to make a statement announcing that the defense of Cuba was assured and that no more arms were needed. Moscow could then inform us that no more arms would be shipped.

3. Castro should be asked by Moscow to state that he has no design on his neighbors...

To all of this D appeared to listen intently. I believe he was impressed.

He answered that in spite of our worries, the USSR was not shipping offensive weapons and well understood the dangers of doing so. Moreover, it was unreasonable for the US, as a major power, to expect a small weak country such as Cuba to make such public concessions to US public opinion even though both the SU and Cuba might accept all three points in principle.

Why, he asked repeatedly, do we get so excited about so small a nation?...

I commented...If Dob were misinformed about the types of weapons now arriving in Cuba, it would not be the first time in diplomatic history that this had occurred.

... In the course of his many questions and comments, D stressed what he called the Sov Gov's desire for better understanding, its inability to fathom US public opinion, its irritation over the fact that we are constantly saying "wait until after the election--and you are always having elections," ((so far as I have seen, US never brought this up; SU always did. Were they telling Dob that we were obsessed with this? Who believed it in Moscow? Were we bringing it up, in other talks?)) its concern over its own internal needs, and its rejection of my "thesis that the USSR, Cuba or someone else should make all the concessions."

...Our reactions to Cuba appear to have surprised him, and he is frankly at a loss now to explain them. He returned to this question again and again.

((Then, suppose he had known of plans; would he have predicted strong US reaction, advised against them?))

Presumably, by Oct 13 B knew of 11-28's and was referring to them (published on 11 Oct); presumably he would not have known (?) of reports on missiles.

D's assurance, in context, is pretty definite. B's comment is the only one I saw where anyone even raised the possibility that D might not know; though this took place after Oct 11, by which time D's comment appeared definitely wrong.

If reported immediately, B's proposal would have suggested: We will accept 11-28's, if you don't send any more.

(memo sent to Pres when written, on Oct 14.)

(only assurances in Aug and Sept influenced Pres reaction up to Sept 13; Dob-Sorenson Aug 23 and Sept 6; Dob-Stevenson Sept 6

K-K

2.

K said probably he would travel to UNGA at end November. Early in Nov, he would be busy with domestic problems. If situation were favorable then, he would be glad to meet with Pres. He had good recollections meeting with Pres. Then perhaps they could: 1) agree on test ban, which he would like to do; 2) exchange views on disarmament; and 3) he would also like to agree on West Berlin and create a calmer atmosphere for disarmament. For time being, Soviets would do nothing and make no statements until elections. He had given his word on that.

Koh: said I would hope meanwhile there would be no developments which would make a meeting difficult. (mentioned Gromyko was to see Pres day after tomorrow).

K repeated that they would not undertake anything to worsen relations. He regretted that things had not worked out in accordance with his discussion with Amb Thompson. It was regrettable that Cuban question had blown up right in middle of election campaign.

(K noted that he had not known earlier that appointment was fixed for Gromyko with Pres. I said we had just learned this today. K said he was glad and thanked Pres for finding time to receive G).

K asked me to convey best wishes to Pres and hope that he would have success in election campaign, as well as wishes for good health and success to his family, his wife and mother.

(Koh note: clear ~~is~~ that he has as of now made basic decision to make the trip.)

Gromyko--JFK, Oct 18, 5 pm (Pres, SecState, Thompson, Hillenbrand;
Gromyko, Semenov, Dobrynin)

Mr. G then said that the Soviet Government had already indicated that it would do nothing with regard to West Berlin before the US elections, unless it was compelled to do otherwise by the activities of the other side. However, the Sov Gov proceeded from the fact that it was necessary to hold an active dialogue in November to bring about concrete results with regard to a German peace treaty and to the normalization of the West Berlin situation on the basis of such a treaty. The Sov Gov would like to hope that at that time an understanding concerning a German peace treaty...would at last be reached. If there should be no such understanding, the Soviet Government would be compelled, and Mr G wished to emphasize the word "compelled", to sign, together with a number of other states, a peace treaty with the GDR without an understanding with the Western Powers. The SU would also be compelled to take such steps as were integrally linked with a peace settlement, steps of which the US and the Pres personally had been informed on a number of occasions, including by Mr K personally.

...G : the Pres had said that if the Sov proposal were to be accepted ((without US troops)) West Berlin would ~~maximize~~ come under the control of the GDR and that the social order of West Berlin would be threatened by this. Mr G asserted that there was no reason for such fears, or doubts, or suspicions, because the USSR was prepared to undertake solemn guarantees, together with the US and the other Western Powers and also with the UN, ensuring respect for the status of West Berlin. He professed not to be able to understand why the Pres believed that the collective weight and prestige of those nations or the weight and prestige of the UN would not constitute sufficient guarantees of what the President called the freedom of West Berlin. ((This on Oct 18!))

...Pres emphasized that if the SU desired to continue to permit the people of West Berlin to choose their fate, he did not see why withdrawal of Western forces was of any importance. ...West Berlin was not a NATO base and our troops there were symbolic. ...a symbolic guarantee of the freedom of the city.

...

...(K believed Heads of State should meet to discuss the problems which were dividing the two Powers, and first and foremost the question of a German peace treaty and of West Berlin. If Mr. K should have an opportunity of doing so, he would come to New York in the latter part of November in connection with General Assembly. Thus, what was meant was the possibility of K's coming after the US elections.

2.

G proceeded with prepared text on Cuba.

...For quite some time there had been an unabated anti-Cuban campaign in the US, a campaign which was apparently backed by the USG. Now the USG wished to institute a blockade against trade with Cuba, and there had also been some talk of organized piracy under the aegis of United States. All this could lead only to great misfortunes for mankind. The USG seemed to believe that the Cubans must settle their internal affairs not at their own discretion, but at the discretion of the US. Yet Cuba belonged to Cubans and not to the US. If this was so, why then statements were being made in the US advocating invasion of Cuba? What did the US want to do with Cuba? What could Cuba do to the US?

... All international problems must be resolved by negotiation between the states concerned. After all, the US and USSR were now negotiating and making statements which should be given credence. Was it not sufficient for Cuba to state that it wished negotiations and a solution of existing problems on a mutually acceptable basis?

Mr. G said he knew the Pres appreciated frankness. Mr. K's conversation with the Pres at Vienna had been frank and therefore, with the Pres's permission, he himself wished to be frank, too. The situation today could not be compared to that obtaining in the middle of the 19th century. Modern times were not the same as those when colonies had been divided among colonial powers. Modern times could not be compared to those when it took weeks or months for the voice of the attacked to be heard. Statements had been made that the US was a powerful and great nation; this was true, but what kind of a nation was the USSR? Mr. K had been favorably impressed with the President's statement at Vienna regarding the equality of forces of our two nations. Since this was so, i.e., since the USSR was also a great and strong nation, it could not stand by as a mere observer when aggression was planned and when a threat of war was looming. The USG was surely aware of the SU's attitude toward the recent call-up of 150,000 Reservists in the US.

((What had led to that?)) The SG believed that if both sides were for relaxation of international tensions and for solving the outstanding international problems, such demonstrations could be designed only for the purpose of increasing tensions and should therefore be avoided. If worse should come to worse and if war should occur, then surely 150,000 soldiers would be of no significance. As the Pres was surely aware, today was not 1812, when Napoleon had relied on the number of soldiers, sabres and rifles. Neither could today's situation be compared to 1941, when Hitler had relied on the number of tanks and guns. Today, life itself and military technology had created an entirely different situation, where it was better not to rely on arms. As to Soviet assistance to Cuba, Mr G stated that he was instructed to make it clear, as the Sov Gov had already done, that such assistance, pursued solely for the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba and to the development of Cuba, toward the development of its agriculture and land amelioration, and training by Sov specialists of Cuban national in handling defensive armaments were by no means offensive. If it were otherwise, the Sov Gov would have never become involved in rendering such assistance.

3. G-JFK

Pres said he was glad that Mr. G had referred to Laos because he believed that the Sov policy on that problem was as Mr. G described it. So far the SU had apparently met its obligations just as the US had met them. However, a most serious mistake had been made last summer with respect to Cuba. The US had not pressed the Cuban problem and had attempted to push it aside although of course a number of people in this country opposed the regime now prevailing in Cuba and there were many refugees coming to this country. However, there was no intention to invade Cuba. But then last July the USSR, without any communication from Mr. K to the Pres, had embarked upon the policy of supplying arms to Cuba. The Pres said he did not know the reasons for that shift in Sov policy, because there was no threat of invasion and he would have been glad to give appropriate assurances to that effect had Mr. K communicated with him. Sov arms supply had a profound impact in the United States; Amb Dobrynin was surely aware of how the American people and the Congress felt on this matter. The admin had tried to calm this reaction and he, the Pres, had made a statement that in view of the nature of Sov assistance to Cuba at this time coolness was required. Yet, the Pres said, he wished to stress that Sov actions were extremely serious and he could find no satisfactory explanation for them. The Sov Union was surely aware of US feelings with regard to Cuba, which was only 90 miles away from the US. The Pres continued that the US planned no blockade of Cuba; it was only a question of snips taking arms to Cuba not being able to stop in the US with their return cargo. Thus a very unfortunate situation had developed. The Pres said he did not know where it was taking us but it was the most dangerous situation since the end of the war. The US had taken the Sov statement concerning the nature of the armaments supplied to Cuba at its face value. ((How strong was influence of these statements on our beliefs?)) He, the Pres, had attacked last Sunday in Indianapolis a Senator who was advocating invasion, ((see)) and he had stated that the Cuban problem must be kept in perspective. The Pres reiterated that this was a dangerous situation, and said he did not know where the USSR planned to have it end.

Mr. G said that there had already been an invasion, and it was well known how it ended. It was well known now, both from facts and statements, including the President's own, under what circumstances and by whom that invasion had been organized. ...

The Pres interjected that he had discussed with Mr. K the April, 1961 invasion and had said that it was a mistake. He also pointed out he would have given assurances that there would be no further invasion, either by refugees or by US forces. But last July the SU took certain actions and the situation changed.

...Mr. G continued... also, as far as armaments were concerned, Soviet specialists were training Cubans in handling certain types of armaments which were only defensive--and he wished to stress the word defensive--in character, and thus such training could not constitute a threat to the US. He reiterated that if it were otherwise the SU would never have agreed to render such assistance.

4.

The Pres said that in order to be clear on this Cuban problem he wanted to state the following. The US had no ~~intention~~ intention of invading Cuba. Introduction last July of intensive armaments had complicated the situation and created grave danger. His own actions had been to prevent, unless US security was endangered, anything from being done that might provoke the danger of war. The Pres then read a portion of his Sept 4 statement on Cuba and stated that this had been US position and policy on this question. He noted that the Attorney General had discussed the Cuban situation with Amb Dob so that the latter must be aware of what it was. The Pres again recalled his Indianapolis speech of Sunday ((see)) and said that we were basing our present attitude on facts as they had been described by Mr. Gromyko; our presumption was that the armaments supplied by the USSR were defensive.

Mr. G stated the SU proceeded from the assumption that on basis of SG's statements and his own today the US Gov and the Pres had a clear idea of the Sov policy on this matter and of the Sov evaluation of US action in relation to Cuba. He said he had nothing to add to what he had already said.

...(end) The Pres emphasized that neither he nor Mr. K must take actions leading to a confrontation of our two countries. ...What was inexplicable in the light of what he had thought to be Mr. K's understanding of the US was what had happened in Cuba since July. Since Laos, that particular situation had been the most serious one.

ended at 7:20

Oct 22: Sec called Amb Dob in at 6 pm. (Dob ~~was~~ read letter from Pres to K and copy of address which Pres would make at 7; asked whether letter from Pres would be published and was told that the USG has no intention of publishing at this time or publishing it and would inform Sovs if this decision were changed.) Sec said that he had not been instructed to add any comments and that the speech was self-explanatory. Speaking informally, the Sec said that it was incomprehensible to him how the leaders in Moscow could make such a gross error of judgment as to what the US could accept. He expressed the hope that the SU would make a major effort to correct the situation.

Dob said that "all of this" was unjustifiable and would very strongly aggravate the international situation. He said that he would report the messages and the conversation promptly.
(present: Gutarie, Baraz)

My dear friend: We are now in possession of incontrovertible military letters to Macmillan, ~~de Gaulle, Kennedy~~
(drafted by Johnson)

~~Indisputable~~ evidence that the Sovs have already installed offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba, and that some of these may already be operational. This constitutes a threat to the peace not only of this hemisphere but of the entire free world.

(to Mac: You will recall that last month I stated publicly that the Government of the US would consider the presence of ground-to-ground missiles in Cuba as an offensive threat. In response to my remarks, the Sovs stated that such armaments and military equipment as had been shipped by them to Cuba were exclusively of a defensive nature, and this was repeated to me only last Thursday by Gromyko under instructions.

The foregoing has created a highly critical situation which must be met promptly and fearlessly.

...I am quite clear in my mind that these missiles have got to be withdrawn,...

The object of the quarantine, which will be put into effect immediately, is to prevent the SU from introducing additional missiles into Cuba and to lead to the elimination of the missiles that are already in place.

...I need not point out to you the possible relation of this secret and dangerous move on the part of Khrushchev to Berlin. We must together be prepared for a time of testing.

...This is a solemn moment for our two countries, indeed for the fate of the entire world. It is essential that the already great dangers before us should not be increased through miscalculation or underestimating by the Soviets of what we intend to do, and are prepared to endure, in the race of the course on which they have so recklessly embarked.

Oct 21, 7:41 pm (Thompson drafter)
deliver one hour before speech, 7 pm Oct 22

Sir:

There is attached a copy of the statement I am making tonight ((change to: A copy of the statement I am making tonight concerning developments in Cuba and the reaction of my Government thereto has been handed to your Ambassador in Washington (prefer that K not have immediately available full text of statement: Oct 22, 8:1 pm))

. In view of the gravity of developments to which I refer, I want you to know immediately and accurately the position of my Government on this matter.

In our discussions and exchanges on Berlin and other international questions, the one thing that has most concerned me has been the possibility that your Government would not correctly understand the will and determination of the US in any given situation, since I have not assumed that you or any other sane man would, in this nuclear age, deliberately plunge the world into war which it is crystal clear no country could win and which could only result in catastrophic consequences to the whole world, including the aggressor.

At our meeting in Vienna and subsequently, I expressed our readiness and desire to find, through peaceful negotiation, a solution to any and all problems that divide us. At the same time, I made it clear that in view of the objectives of the ideology to which you adhere, the US could not tolerate any action on your part which in a major way disturbed the existing over-all balance of power in the world. I stated that an attempt to force abandonment of our responsibilities and commitments in Berlin would constitute such an action and that the US would resist with all the power at its command.

It was in order to avoid any incorrect assessment on the part of your Government with respect to Cuba that I publicly stated that if certain developments in Cuba took place, the US would do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies. Moreover, the Congress adopted a resolution expressing its support of this declared policy. Despite this, the rapid development of long-range missile bases and other offensive weapons systems in Cuba has proceeded. I must tell you that the US is determined to remove this threat to the security of this hemisphere.

((change, Oct 22, 9:56 am: I must tell you that the US is determined that this threat to the security of this hemisphere be removed.))

At the same time, I wish to point out that the action we are taking is the minimum necessary to remove the threat to the security of the nations of this hemisphere. The fact of this minimum response should not be taken as a basis, however, for any misjudgement on your part.

I hope that your Government will refrain from any action which would widen or deepen this already grave crisis and that we can agree to resume the path of peaceful negotiation.

Oct 25; received 11:50 am
(Kuznetsov informed Kohler letter would not be published "for the time being.")

Mr. President.

I have just received your letter, and have also acquainted myself with text of your speech of October 22 regarding Cuba.

I would say frankly that measures outlined in your statement represent serious threat to peace and security of peoples. US has openly taken path of gross violation of charter of UN, path of violation of international norms of freedom of navigation on high seas, path of aggressive actions both against Cuba and against SU.

Statement of Government of US cannot be evaluated in any other way than as naked interference in domestic affairs of Cuban Republic, SU, and other states. Charter of UN and international norms do not give right to any state whatsoever to establish in international waters control of vessels bound for shores of Cuban Republic.

It is self-understood that we also cannot recognize right of US to establish control over armaments essential to Republic of Cuba for strengthening of its defensive capacity.

We confirm that armaments now on Cuba, regardless of classification to which they belong, are destined exclusively for defensive purposes, in order to secure Cuban Republic from attack of aggressor.

I hope that Government of US will show prudence and renounce actions pursued by you, which could lead to catastrophic consequences for peace throughout world.

Viewpoint of Soviet Government with regard to your statement of Oct 22 is set forth in statement of Soviet Government which is being conveyed through to you through your ambassador in Moscow.

Oct 23, 6:51 pm

Dear Mr. Chairman :

I have received your letter of Oct 23. I think you will recognize that the steps which started the current chain of events was the action of your Government in secretly furnishing offensive weapons to Cuba. We will be discussing this matter in the Security Council. In the meantime, I am concerned that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it already is.

I hope that you will issue immediately the necessary instructions to your ships to observe the terms of the quarantine, the basis of which was established by the vote of the OAS this afternoon, and which will go into effect at 1400 hours Greenwich time Oct 24. Sincerely,

Soviet Government statement, Oct 25

...The Sov Gov emphasizes once again that all weapons in the Soviet Union's possession are serving and will serve the purposes of defence against aggressors. Under existing international conditions, the presence of powerful weapons, including nuclear rocket weapons, in the Soviet Union is acknowledged by all the peoples in the world to be the decisive factor in deterring the aggressive forces of imperialism from unleashing a world war of annihilation.

...
The US Government accuses Cuba of creating a threat to the security of the US. But who is going to believe that Cuba can be a threat to the US? If we think of the respective size and resources of the two countries, of their armaments, no statesman in his right mind can imagine for one moment that Cuba can be a threat to the US or to any other country. It is hypocritical, to say the least, to say that little Cuba may encroach on the security of the USA.

((But suppose they put 200 missiles there. Sovs could easily and quickly put more MRBMs into Cuba than US had ICBMs or Polaris. Sovs were not being reassuring as to numbers. If

Were we considering question of numbers or significance?))

((If all weapons of SU are "defensive," then what is information content of statements that SU was putting "only" defensive weapons there? What was being ruled out? Form of statements certainly implied that something was being said about type of weapons, in response to US distinctions.

If ICBMs in SU are deterrent to aggression against Cuba, why need MRBMs in Cuba--especially controlled by Soviets?))

With regard to the SU's assistance to Cuba, this assistance is exclusively designed to improve Cuba's defensive capacity. As was stated on 3 September 1962...the SG has responded to the Cuban Government's request to help Cuba with arms. The communique states that such arms and military equipment are intended solely for defensive purposes. ((check))

...The US is demanding that the military equipment Cuba needs for its own defense should be withdrawn from its territory, a step to which no State prizing its independence can, of course, agree.